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The Shakerite

January 15, 2013 / Volume 83 / Issue 6

How to Protect Your Phone From Thieves



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Phone Thefts Stack Up

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**Smartphones Disappearing
Under BYOD Policy**



Loss Can't Obscure Fond Memories



Investigations
Editor Marcia
Brown shares
some of the
treasured
memories of

growing up across the street from a Shaker family who lost a father and a daughter in a house fire Dec. 18.

Read more on page 5



A 34-lb. Backpack?

Some student backpacks are so heavy, wearing them has become unsafe. Until flex night and electronic textbooks are a reality, burdensome backpacks will be difficult to avoid. But, Spotlight has some tricks to lighten your load.

Read more on page 6



Decline of School Spirit

According to a recent lunchtime survey, many Shaker students just aren't committed to school spirit but some would like to see more. From joining in spirit days to attending athletic events, there are many ways to get involved and show support for the school and community.

Read more on page 7

Take Care, or Your Phone May Be Next

Phone theft is a rising problem this year while the stolen phone recovery rate still remains fairly low

CLARA MEDALIE CAMPUS AND CITY

Four months after the debut of Wi-Fi and the new Bring Your Own Device policy, thieves are having a field day stealing iPhones.

"It is happening too much," said security chief Vic Ferrell, who took a desperate step out of frustration. "I called Apple to see if there was anything we could do to slow it down."

Ferrell would not give a precise number of reported thefts, but he said there are "not hundreds, but still too many." He explained that even if an iPhone is not connected to a phone service, it can still be used to surf the Internet. This is a popular thing to do with stolen iPhones, and the lack of phone service makes them impossible to locate. Ferrell also said thieves sell phones to local stores, some of which do not check too carefully for a phone's origin.

The iPhone 5 retails for \$649.99 but can be purchased for \$199.99 with a Verizon contract. In the September issue of the Shakerite, Assistant Principal Eric Hutchinson said he had high expectations for Shaker students concerning one another's belongings. He said, "As someone who believes in young people, I am hoping that our student body rises to the challenge by demonstrating respect for one another's personal property." The number of thefts so far this year contradicts Hutchinson's expectations.



Amanda Ahrens

Ferrell said that restrooms are the most common place for phone theft because students leave their phones on the sinks. However, it is also the easiest to recover phones stolen there because cameras record everyone who enters and exits. Ferrell said the second most common place is the classroom. If phones are stolen there, it is almost impossible to recover them because there are no cameras. Another common place is the cafeteria. There are also rare reports of phone theft incidents when students are walking home. Usually, someone asks to borrow a phone then takes it and runs.

About 30 percent of phones reported stolen are recovered, according to Ferrell. Chances are greater the sooner the theft is reported. Ferrell said that in a typical day, there can be as many as three to four thefts but sometimes none. Teachers are also among the targets. English teacher Valerie Doersen's iPhone was stolen out of her bag that she left unattended in class from first through eighth period. "I don't trust anybody anymore, at all," said Doersen, who filed a police report and used the Find My iPhone app to track her phone to Menlough Road. She did not, however, attempt to retrieve it.

"I was kind of afraid to do that," said Doersen, who checked Gamestop for her phone to no avail.

Social studies teacher Amanda Ahrens had her phone stolen off of her desk in Room 108 during one of her classes. "It was my own class, which makes me sad," she said.

Ironically, Ahrens said she had taken a student out in the hall to talk about behavior and that's when her phone was stolen.

The incident left Ahrens phoneless; she does not have a land line. She asked her stu-



ANDREW BOYLE/THE SHAKERITE

One of the top places phone theft occurs is in the classroom, which is also one of the hardest places to catch a thief because there are no cameras.

dents in the class about theft, but no one revealed anything.

She was disappointed. "I would do a lot for my students," said Ahrens, who now feels a "loss of trust."

The market for stolen phones is also disrupting academics. "When they lose it, their whole day is shot," Ferrell said of the victims. "It's such an interference."



Vic Ferrell

How To Best Protect Your Phone

The surest way to keep a phone from being stolen is to not even bring it to school. However, few students are willing to sacrifice their phones for an hour let alone an entire school day.

Head of security Vic Ferrell gave the next best protective in-school measures. "Don't bring them to class," he said. Instead, keep them in a locker. Ferrell said that a phone has never been reported stolen from a student's school locker therefore they are very safe.

Ferrell also said never to put a phone down in class. One of the most common places phone theft occurs is in the classroom, usually when students are charging their phones.

However, Ferrell said that the "best way to keep your phone safe is to keep it on you." English teacher Valerie Doersen had her phone stolen from her bag and she didn't know until much later in the day.

By following these protective measures, the risk of theft greatly decreases but sometimes theft is unavoidable. A last resort can be the Find My iPhone app, which can track an iPhone to a precise location. This app works on any iPhone and is used frequently by students to locate stolen phones.

COMPILED BY CLARA MEDALIE

Swim Team Victim of Woodbury Phone Theft



CLARA MEDALIE CAMPUS AND CITY

Phone theft is not limited to the high school. Swimmers who use the Woodbury locker room have also been targeted, and senior Walker Smith reports "three [thefts] in the last month."

Smith was one of the victims. He said that ever since freshman year, he has left his phone in his unlocked locker, not expecting anything to happen to it. Once it was stolen, Smith talked to Woodbury security but they couldn't do anything about it.

Junior swimmer Liam McFadden was involved in a similar incident at the beginning of swim season. After a typical two-hour practice, he returned to the locker room to change. "My locker was open, and most of its contents were spread on the floor," he said. "I immediately felt my jeans' pockets and found that my phone was missing."

McFadden said, "It's kind of worrying that someone is going through the locker rooms of Woodbury looking for stuff to steal." He now uses a lock on his locker.

Frequently, swimmers do not use locks in the Woodbury locker room, where a lot of phone thefts occur. In the high school's locker rooms, locks are used on every locker and the combinations are changed each semester.

Residents Speak Up on Search for New Leader

In two public meetings, attendees state expectations for new superintendent, including thick skin and compassion

JOHN VODREY, MARIA SLOVIKOVSKI AND SAM MITRO
STAFF REPORTERS

Attendees of Dec. 13 and 18 public interest meetings regarding the superintendent search voiced hopes for an ambitious superintendent with a strong community presence and an understanding of how important Shaker schools are to the city.

Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates conducted the two public-input meetings on what the Shaker School District should look for in a new superintendent.

HYA is conducting a search for Shaker's new superintendent. The new pick will replace Mark Freeman, who has headed the district for 24 years. HYA is beginning its search process with a series of meetings for various constituent groups to share what they'd like to see in a new superintendent. The meetings Dec. 13 and 18 were open to the public.

Twenty-two people attended the meetings. According to HYA senior associate Marvin Edwards, the groups were average sized for focus groups.

Edwards was present at both meetings, but senior associate Ted Blaesing was only in town for the Dec. 13 meeting.

Edwards asked the participants what qualities they wanted to see in the next superintendent as well as what they thought were the district's strengths and what concerns they had for the district.

Participants said they would like the next superintendent to be an innovator, a visionary, a strong communicator and someone able to empower those around them. Some felt the new superintendent should be very different from Friedman. One resident said he wants a superintendent who is "not afraid to

break some eggs."

Other Shaker residents said they would like a superintendent with a strong presence in the community who knows how Shaker works. They said the new superintendent needs to realize that the school system, including the students and parents, is the main focus of our community.

Participants said the new superintendent cannot shy away from talking about Shaker's difficult issues and needs to listen to the community's opinions before proposing new ideas — and will likely need to compromise.

Community members were also concerned that the new superintendent maintain the high Shaker standards of being accepting of differences and socially supportive of everyone.

Some said the new leader should have prior hands-on experience with working with urban youth and a thick, yet compassionate skin to deal with Shaker's challenges.

The person that assumes Freeman's role will be met with a community with many concerns for Shaker's school system.

Top among those concerns was a feeling that the schools do a poor job working with middle-of-the-road or unmotivated students. One parent said, "There is this huge population that's in the middle who might be underserved."

Others attending the meetings listed the achievement gap, behavioral issues and utilization of new technology among their concerns. One mother said, "We have to be a district that is responsive to how rapidly education is changing."

Community members also spoke of the district's strengths. Some mentioned the quality of teaching and student diversity, while others recognized the



JOHN VODREY/THE SHAKERITE

Marvin Edwards, a senior associate at the search firm Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, talks to community members Dec. 13 about their wishes for Mark Freeman's replacement. The firm plans to create a leadership profile to find the right person for the job.

high level of community support for the schools.

HYA will create a leadership profile for the Board of Education with information from the two public meetings and the series of private focus group meetings completed in the past week. HYA will present this in January and used to advertise the position to potential candidates.

After Fire, Student Council Collects Donations for Family



A demolition crew removes debris remaining after the Dec. 18 Daleford Road house fire. The fatal fire began in the middle of the night and continued on through the morning. Student Council has collected more than \$3000 to help the affected family.

Cash, gift cards, clothing, good wishes gathered as Shaker rallies support

EVAN DUBAIL CAMPUS AND CITY EDITOR

Student Council organized a fund-raising effort before winter break for the Reynolds family, whose Daleford Road home burned Dec. 18.

The fire began some time during the night and destroyed the home as well as the family's possessions before firefighters from Shaker Heights and nearby communities arrived. Mary Paige Reynolds, 18, and her father, Jance, 62, perished in the fire. Two other daughters, Sarah and Lauren, survived along with their mother, Yvette Reynolds.

Student Body President Juliet Bellin-Warren came up with the idea for the fund-raising campaign along with Student Council Adviser Amanda Ahrens and other faculty. The goal was to raise money through donations from students and Shaker residents. The money was sent to the family's church,

Cedar Hill Baptist, to be donated to the Reynolds Family Memorial Fund.

So far, more than \$9000 has been raised, along with approximately \$300 in gift cards. Donations are still being accepted at this time. Information about how to donate remains available at the district website, shaker.org.

Bellin-Warren believes the fundraiser was a great success.

"I was very impressed by the school's sympathy and desire to help," Bellin-Warren said. "I would say it shows Shaker's true colors. We are a supportive and caring group of individuals."

A card of condolences was also made for the Reynolds family. Student Council encouraged everyone to sign. Accountant Marian Steenbergh took care of the card in the Main Office, where it was displayed on the counter for signing. The card was sent to the family over winter break.

Clothing donations also accrued in the Main Office and were delivered to the church.

I was very impressed by the school's sympathy and desire to help.

JULIET BELLIN-WARREN



Arming Teachers Will Not Stop Gun Violence

In light of the recent shootings in Newtown, CT, the nation is abuzz with discussions regarding gun laws and limitations. But rather than eliminating guns, or restricting gun ownership, Tennessee State Sen. Frank Nicely proposed using more guns by arming school staff. While we are entitled to defend ourselves, a gun in every classroom poses problems.

Let's put this in perspective. There are seven Shaker schools. If Nicely's bill passed each school would have at least one armed officer and any employee who was licensed to carry a gun would undergo a training seminar and then be allowed to carry their gun in school as a method of defense. Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine joined the frenzy when he announced Ohio teachers would be trained as first responders. As of Jan. 8, more than 900 Ohio teachers had signed up for free gun training seminars.

According to drc.ohio.gov, the Ohio State Penitentiary is the prison housing the most and highest security prisoners. In the prison there are 375 staff members and 268 armed guards. If all 375 staff members were to carry a gun, there would be 643 guns within

the prison walls.

According to director of communications Peggy Caldwell, there are 839 people working for the Shaker schools. If a bill such as Nicely's were to become law in Ohio, there would be 839 people who could, if they wanted to, carry a gun in our schools. And, as a district, we would be more armed than a high-security prison. Have we arrived at the point at which we admit that as a society we have so little control over crime that we prepare for it to such an extreme extent? Students at Shaker steal phones, iPods and even pens and pencils. Students fight. While this is hardly an optimistic look at our school, it is a reality. If we had guns on the premises, those could be stolen as well. A locked drawer isn't enough to safely hold a gun.

Additionally, when people have access to weapons, there is the issue of mental and emotional stability. While this is not a day-to-day concern, people get angry, upset or generally distraught. We'd like to think that people have more control than to shoot a gun due to emotional stress, but it is important to address

the possibility of an accident, and not provide guns than to risk the chance of shooting someone. With so many teachers and so many guns, what is the likelihood that in one of those thousands of classrooms, something horrible could happen? Would this risk be worth it in comparison to the small chance that a school shooting was to occur?

Our security is important, and raising our security standards has become more important due to the slew of school shootings around the country. In Ohio, school districts determine their own gun control policies and whether or not carrying licensed guns is permitted on the school campus. DeWine did not specifically endorse teachers carry guns, but he did state that his office would expand safety training for employees.

Security within our school is extremely important, but putting weapons within our school is not going to secure it. If anything, it provides additional opportunity for a tragedy.



Remembering the House Before Daleford

The phone rang, jolting me out of my algebraic trance. "It was the Reynolds in that Daleford house that burned down. Mary Paige and [her dad] Jance are gone," my dad said. I couldn't respond—I couldn't even wrap my mind around it. It wasn't until the next day that it hit me and all the memories came flooding back. The Reynolds had lived across the street from me before they moved to Daleford. I was 3 when I met the three Reynolds girls. We grew up together.

When they moved to a Daleford house, the empty white house I knew as the Reynolds' former home stared at me from across

the street every day. On Dec. 18 the new Reynolds' home burned down, leaving an even emptier shell on Daleford and leaving the family to face the loss of two beloved members. I had my first ice cream float at the Reynolds house. The dusky sky barely lent us enough light to clamber down from our perches in our favorite tree and race over to the front stoop.

Sitting on the cool stone after a hot day playing in their yard, the sweet bubbly drink was perfect. It became my favorite right then, an ice cream float with Coca-Cola. After a few noisy slurps, Mary Paige joined us with her ever-present Barbie doll on the stoop.

My dad called from across the street, "Time to



Marcia Brown

come home!"

"But Daaaadd," I argued. Unsurprisingly, it wasn't a successful argument.

That day was one of those blindingly bright days when the heat radiated off her asphalt driveway. I skittered across the driveway in my bare feet—even though it was cooler in the late afternoon.

Promising to come back the next day, I thanked Mrs. Reynolds and grudgingly went home for dinner. After the ice cream float, I wasn't even hungry anymore. Another memory takes me to a time we rode scooters on the sidewalk where we had drawn rainbows and flowers in bright chalk. I tried to follow Sarah Rose and ride down a grassy hill. Instead, I flipped over the handlebars and ripped my thigh open. That was the first time I didn't cry. I was so proud.

I toughened up after that. We became more daredevil. The Reynolds' driveway sloped downhill and mine continued the slope across the street. We would wait until the last minute before the car came around the corner and race our bikes across the street. Not the best idea, I must admit in retrospect. Maybe Mary Paige knew it wasn't a smart idea but she never said.

One night my family and I were eating dinner outside on the patio when Mary Paige walked across the street to say hello. She was so timid but so kind. I walked her back home to make sure she was safe. She always said hi to me in the hallways at Shaker. Through middle school and high school she never

forgot me.

But her autism limited our interaction at school. I wish now that I had spent time in the special-ed classrooms.

In my backyard there was an old woodhouse—it's gone now. But before they tore it down, the Reynolds girls and I fixed it up; we put in a stone floor and cleaned it and built a fire pit outside. We called it "Narnia." Lauren Grace loved it. We would play all day in the summer time until the girls' dad came home or my dad called me for dinner.

Later, whether plying me with food or new activities to try, my dad somehow lured me into learning to mow the lawn. It was a trap. Instead of playing outside with the Reynolds, I would have to finish my yard work and then run across the street. Their dad would pull in their driveway and roll down the window of his dark green Jeep. He would wave and smile at me if I was mowing the lawn but if I was in the Reynolds' yard, I would run over with the girls to greet him.

They moved out of their house just a little while ago. It was eerie not seeing their dad pull in every day, or seeing Mary Paige outside with her Barbie doll on the front lawn.

Now, there isn't even the possibility that they will come back.

No matter how many times I walk up that driveway and knock on their door—even if I do it every day, the family I grew up with won't answer.

Admitting That It's Time to Let a Best Friend Find Peace

Putting your pet to sleep is a terrifying peek into the real world. As a faithful pet owner, one of the most agonizing decisions comes when you must decide if it's that time. The time to let your beloved dog finally be at peace. Although perhaps not equivalent to losing a family member, the loss is nevertheless profound and the responsibility great.

Lately my family has been pondering if it's "that time" for our family dog, Gracey, as she is nearing the final active days of her life. This is the strife that every pet owner faces at some point. Although many pet owners know that their pets could

probably live on uncomfortably for months or even years, when is it actually time to euthanize your precious furry friend?

Miami veterinarian Jon Rappaport answers pet owners' questions at the website PetPlace.com. There, he suggests what to consider when contemplating euthanizing a pet: "I believe quality of life means that the pet is eating, drinking, maintaining their body weight and does things that suggest they are enjoying life, such as walk outside to go to the bathroom or maybe even play a little."

Euthanizing a pet involves professional veterinarians putting injured or suffering animals to sleep humanely, rather than letting them die naturally, which can be a long, painful process for both the pet and the owner. Although dogs can't vocally communicate with their guardians, they can communicate through body lan-

guage. Even if a faithful pet owner can tell when a dog is unhappily moping around, the main problem is deciding when to finally let go.

Being a family in this process is absolutely agonizing. When your 45-pound standard poodle who has never failed to bring a smile to the faces of many approaches 16 years old, there are some things to take into account. I am constantly getting lost in the abyss of what if. Miracles do happen. What if one day she springs from her dark and dreary state and acts like a puppy again?

The most unbearable, agonizing decision ever is that stage when you don't know if your pet is suffering so much that euthanasia is the right decision, or if he or she enjoys life enough to stay on earth and prosper.

"Hannah, she is just old, and it's almost time for her to go," my mother says. Her piercing words make me cringe, but silence is my loudest cry. Her words crush all my hope, and I accept that it's time to face the facts.

Most would say it's for the better because no pet owner wants a dog to live in misery. But losing a pet is like losing a family member, someone dear to your heart. It's not easy, especially because it can also be a young person's first experience with death. In a way, pets help us prepare for future losses.

Loyal pet owners see their dogs as more than just furry canines, which is why they are known as man's best friend. I have begun to believe that in due time a man can be a dog's best friend, too. There comes a time when even best friends have to part their separate ways and say goodbye.



Hannah Hevering



SASHA RAE GRANT/THE SHAKERITE

Packed With Books, Papers and Pain

Homework, bulky textbooks put stress on students and their backs

BRIDGET COOK SPOTLIGHT EDITOR

Fling open the front door, you walk through the kitchen and shrug off your backpack. It's crammed so tightly with notebooks and textbooks that it hardly zips anymore. Grateful to have the heavy load off your shoulders, you roll your neck and stretch your back, feeling the same familiar soreness that comes at the end of each school day.

You're not alone. Heavy backpacks plague high school and elementary students nationwide. The backpacks' weight stems from the ever-increasing size of textbooks and the deluge of homework teachers assign

their students. Piles of worksheets build up in backpacks, which students lug back and forth daily. A New York Times story about carrying such a heavy load cited "stress fractures in the back, inflammation of growth cartilage, back and neck strain and nerve damage in the neck and shoulders."

"I've worked here for 12 years and it's always been a problem," said Shaker nurse Paula Damm of the heavy backpacks. "I've told kids to use their lockers... but a lot of times kids just carry all their books because their lockers are too far. It looks like they're climbing Mt. Everest!"

Carrying such heavy backpacks can be particularly detrimental to students with scoliosis, the abnormal curvature of the spine. While heavy backpacks do not cause this condition, Damm explained that they can worsen the pain that comes with it. "I've told kids to get rolling backpacks," said Damm. She also recommends students clasp their backpack's straps around their waists to redistribute the weight.

Sophomore Sarah Marek has scoliosis, which causes her back pain. "I don't think it gives me problems directly related to scoliosis other than having to carry my textbooks in my arms instead of my bag."

Physicians nationally and internationally recommend students not carry backpacks that exceed 10 to 15 percent of the wearer's body weight. Upon weighing my backpack, I discovered that it was 4 pounds heavier than the healthy amount.

Dr. Betsy Feighan, a pediatrician at University Hospitals, explained the effect that regularly carrying a backpack can have on a spine. "It distorts the normal curvature of the back," said Feighan. "Our spines have a normal in-



Colleen Bradley



Paula Damm



ANDREW BOYLE/THE SHAKERITE

Three girls carry hefty backpacks as they traverse the hallway Dec. 20. Doctors suggest wearing backpacks on both shoulders to relieve stress on the spine, and nurse Paula Damm suggests buckling the waist belt if possible.

ward curvature. Carrying a backpack can change that curve and cause muscle strain."

Feighan added that posture and balance can be affected. "If you have a heavy backpack, you need to lean forward to compensate for it. This messes with balance and spine curvature." Like Damm, Feighan has had patients with scoliosis and urged them to use rolling backpacks or waist straps to ease their loads. Another suggestion Feighan offered was to always carry a backpack on both shoulders. "Theoretically, if your curve was the same way and you were wearing your backpack on one shoulder, it could be detrimental," said Feighan.

So how can this issue be solved? The first step is to reduce the amount of homework assigned so students lug less weight home. Shaker already has a system in place, flex night, which assigns each subject one homework-free night a week. Test days are also specified by department. However, many teachers don't stick to flex night or assigned test dates.

"While some of my teachers follow flex night strictly, a bunch of them will disregard it or move it to another day, but that's not the point," freshman Colleen Bradley said. "It's

supposed to spread homework out and relieve stress." Bradley estimates that two of her six teachers actually follow flex night.

Another way to avoid overloading backpacks may be the move toward electronic textbooks. Putting textbooks on tablets or the Internet would make them mobile and weightless. President Barack Obama has expressed his goal for American schools to rely almost completely on e-textbooks by 2017. However, new problems arise when students carry expensive technology to and from school, making them a target for theft.

Until recently, the Cleveland Heights school district issued iPads to its students to take home and use for academic purposes. However, after a student walking home from middle school was threatened and the iPad stolen, the district decided to keep the iPads at school overnight. As a district neighboring Cleveland Heights, Shaker could run into the same issues if iPads or other electronics were issued to students.

Until a clear solution to this weighty problem arises, it appears that students will have no choice but to continue to "climb Mt. Everest" on their daily walks through the halls.



15

The maximum percentage of the wearer's body weight that a backpack should be, according to physicians nationwide.

22

The average percent of his or her bodyweight a student carries, according to the American Chiropractic Association. 22 is also the average weight in pounds of a high school student's backpack, according to Hartley Chiropractic.com

3,300

The number of children between the ages of 5-14 years treated in emergency rooms for backpack-related injuries in 1998, according to ctchiropractic.com.

21,600

The combined load in pounds of carrying a 12-pound backpack for an entire school year and lifting it 10 times per day is equivalent to the weight of six cars, according to the Chester County Hospital System website.

27,900

The estimated number of backpack-related injuries among U.S. kids and adults last year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

COMPILED BY BRIDGET COOK

NOW THAT'S A HEAVY COURSELOAD!

Many students carry backpacks that weigh well over the 10 to 15 percent of their bodyweight, the maximum amount that they can carry safely.



ANDREW BOYLE/THE SHAKERITE
Several Shakerite editors' backpacks were weighed on the scale in nurse Paula Damm's health office. The heaviest backpack belonged to a junior girl and weighed 34 pounds, and the one pictured to the left weighed nearly 20.

We've Got Spirit, At Least a Few



WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

The crowd displayed little spirit when the Shaker men's basketball team took on Strongsville Dec. 18. The Raiders cruised to a 73-39 victory over Strongsville and are currently 9-2 and ranked number one in the Plain Dealer High School Men's Basketball Poll. Senior hockey player Jonathan Greenberg values school spirit at games, "Momentum shifts when you have a crowd there," he said.

Even with winning sports teams, Shaker students exhibit a lack of enthusiasm

MARIA SLOVIKOWSKI STAFF REPORTER

"One! We are the Raiders! Two! A little bit louder! Three! I still can't hear you!"

This common school cheer is supposed to finish with "Four! More! More! More!" and then begin again in a perpetual declaration of spirit.

However, according to a lunchtime survey, most students are not committed to school spirit and only dress up for spirit days when they remember to.

The survey showed that many students have varying opinions of what school spirit is. How can school spirit unify Shaker if students can't agree on its definition?

Freshman Saeesha Pimplikar's definition of spirit involves community. "Spirit is being proud of your community and showing it," she said.

School spirit directly affects junior Rohit Kumar's opinion of a school. Kumar defined school spirit as "an individual's way of representing his or her school in a positive way."

Solon High School freshman Elise August believes school spirit adds positively to the atmosphere of her school. "Spirit is showing pride for your school and its accomplishments."

While many Shaker students agree spirit requires enthusiasm and a positive attitude, they display it differently and for different reasons. It depends on how much they participate in extracurricular activities and sports, and how much pride they have in academic accomplishments.

Senior Josh Schultheiss believes school spirit is

important, but many Shaker students lack it. "[Spirit] doesn't appeal to the vast majority of students," he said.

Senior Student Council members Ana Sinicariello and Juliet Bellin-Warren are loaded with school spirit, but both agree they would still be spirited if they weren't in Student Council. "If it was possible, I would make school spirit mandatory," said Sinicariello, senior class secretary and former head of spirit. "School spirit increases school unity." Promoting school spirit by participating in academic and extracurricular activities deepens her appreciation of Shaker.

At other schools, students seem to be more enthusiastic about school spirit. "Spirit is really important to my school because it shows that we're all proud Comets!" August said, referring Solon's mascot. "As a result of Solon's school spirit," August said, "I realized that all the students act as a family and are really enthusiastic about pretty much everything."

Laurel sophomore Mara Cohen said, "Laurel's school spirit has made the community closer. We all have something to talk about and enjoy together."

Laurel holds many school spirit activities and competitions that excite students. One of Laurel's spirit activities is its annual song contest, for which students compete to write and perform song parodies with a Laurel theme. There are two spirit teams that compete throughout the school year and are very supportive of Laurel athletic teams. "We are all very close, and we have a lot of traditions that keep the spirit alive," Cohen said.

This year, Bellin-Warren has noticed a declined display of school spirit at Shaker. "We as a Student Council should stress the spirit days more," Bellin-Warren said. Sinicariello would like to see spirit days for more teams to increase people's excitement about more sports than only football, basketball and hockey. But Pimplikar thinks that students are unresponsive to administrators' and Student Council's attempts at encouraging school spirit because spirit is not very important to students.



JOSH JACOBS//THE SHAKERITE English Department Chairwoman Elaine Mason has noticed a gradual decline in school spirit since she started working at Shaker seven years ago. Mason has observed "more students denigrating their school" than when she began. "The change in spirit affects the climate in the hallway," she said. People don't seem to respect everything as much as they used to.

Mason believes socioeconomics may play a role in the decrease in school spirit. "I think a lot of people don't feel a part of the school community," she said.

Athletes value their peers' support. Senior hockey defenseman Jonathan Greenberg plays the same regardless of spirit level, but likes when the student body unites. "Momentum shifts when you have a crowd there," Greenberg said.

Shaker Heights High School offers 58 different clubs. Five fall teams had a winning record this season. With the vast opportunity for school involvement, why don't Shaker students have more spirit?

Bellin-Warren said, "Spirit is something everyone in the school should have."

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